

Christianity and Society

VENTURES IN SOCIAL ACTION

by

RUFUS CORNELSEN

THE THEOLOGIAN IN POLITICS TODAY

by

DANIEL JENKINS

CHRISTIAN ETHICS AND THE ATOM BOMB

by

EDWARD LEROY LONG, JR.

BOOK REVIEWS

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THE SPRING CONFERENCE

The Spring Conference of the Frontier Fellowship is scheduled for May 19-20. The exact place is not yet determined, but will be in New York City or in the general vicinity. Winnifred Wygal is chairman of the committee arranging the program. Plans are in preparation for meetings on the Far Eastern situation, European political and social developments, a theological problem, and practical problems of the church.

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REINHOLD NIEBUHR

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EDITORIALS

The Wisdom of the World

There is a curious pathos in the vapid character of so much that passes for "wisdom" in the modern world, particularly the wisdom of the psychologists and social scientists who survey the problems of our age and seek to solve them by a rigorous application of the "methods" of the natural sciences to the issues of human existence.

Let us take as an example the recent pronouncements of George Brock Chisholm, Director General of the World Health Organization. Writing in *Science*, Jan. 14, 1949, Mr. Chisholm tries to explain how science can help to develop human nature so that it will be capable of world citizenship. The problem is, he declares, to extend the injunction "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" so that it will include the community of mankind rather than merely one's tribe or nation. So far, so good. The "catch," he declares, is that "most people can not love themselves in a healthy and natural way which tolerantly accepts all their human urges as normal and inevitable aspects of the healthy functioning of man and woman." The idea that any urge is "normal" because it is "inevitable" betrays the moral relativism, not to say moral nihilism of this kind of naturalism. Many of us, Mr. Chisholm goes on, "by being civilized too early or too forcibly have been driven to believe that our natural urges are 'bad.' . . . This is the dreadfully damaging concept of 'original sin.'" It causes children to "hate themselves" and to

project "these feelings of despising, distrust and hate upon other people." This is the root of aggression. It persuades people to throw the epithets of "Nazi," "reactionary," or "nigger-lover" at other people.

Evidently there are no Nazis, tyrants, or false systems of justice in the world. There are only self-hating individuals who make such charges against their fellowmen. If with the aid of "scientific and mature people" we could get rid of authoritarian efforts to "change local concepts and customs," the world community would emerge. Nobody would make accusations against anyone else. Everyone would love his neighbor because everyone loved himself first. It is not clear what we would do with actual tyrants. Presumably all forms of aggression and will-to-power would disappear because they are all rooted in "self-hatred."

There is, however, another root of evil in human nature which must be considered. Undue forms of self-assertion seem also to arise from insecurity. The way to eliminate this insecurity is to teach mothers how to take care of their infants. "Successful human relations start in infancy." Therefore the baby must be given absolute security. "We all know," declares Mr. Chisholm, "that babies need, not just want but need, completely uncritical love, love whose manifestations are quite independent of the baby's behavior. In this situation only can the most desirable feelings of being wanted and loved and of 'belonging' arise." This inner security can then be indetermi-

nately extended to "include family, friends and fellow citizens" and "it can no longer safely stop at national boundaries." Evidently the secure individual who knows that he "belongs," because he was never chastised by his mother, is a potential world citizen. All that is required is to give his sense of security a wider and wider scope.

It need hardly be stated that this prescription for the world's ills is the most pathetic nonsense which has ever been preached in the name of science. It would be insignificant if it were unique. It is unfortunately typical. A group of psychologists are anxious to have UNESCO undertake a vast study of human behavior in order to find a way of destroying the aggressive impulses of nations by destroying the aggressive tendencies in children. These prescriptions are actually on a considerably lower level of insight than the utopian schemes of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Most of those rested upon undue confidence in the capacity of human reason *per se* to overcome the irrational impulses of human existence. These modern versions picture "reason" as armed with scientific technics, delving into the mystery of the human soul and finding there either biological impulses which can be easily sublimated or socially created impulses which can easily be changed by the right "therapy."

Let us look at the nonsense of the first proposition, which derives all aggressive tendencies from self-hatred, which is in turn derived from "the dreadful concept of original sin." The modern world does not believe in original sin. Our secular age has rejected that doctrine more wholeheartedly than any other Christian doctrine. There ought to be some evidence that secular individuals with their easy conscience and their natural self-love are on the way of becoming amiable and non-aggressive individuals. Yet our secular age has spawned hatreds and conflicts of vaster proportions than any known in previous ages. The Russian Marxists have moreover disavowed the doctrine of original sin more

completely than the liberal world. A good communist knows that evil propensities are due solely to a social institution, the property system. He is therefore also certain that an individual who is no longer conditioned by the property system has regained the original innocence of mankind. He is so sure that he is willing to proceed with the utmost ruthlessness against any individual or society which does not share his faith and embody his type of virtue. Obviously the root of hatred and aggression in this case is not self-hatred but a complete complacency about the virtue and the good intention of the self, individually and collectively.

But perhaps these poor Russians are only partly saved because they have not benefited from Mr. Chisholm's other prescription of salvation. Their mothers have not loved them uncritically enough. We must see to it that mother's clinics are established in Russia to teach the value of this uncritical love. Before doing so we might pause to remember that only a decade ago the psychologists were teaching that even a baby can quickly become a tyrant if the mother is too quick to gratify its desires. They therefore counseled mothers not to pick up their children when they cried. Once they started on that road they would be at the mercy of an infant tyrant. It was at any rate inadvisable to give the baby the false sense of a secure world when he actually lived in an insecure world. Aggression and other anti-social instincts were attributed to "spoiled" children. Their mother's uncritical love had failed to lay the foundation of an attitude of adjustment to the interests of others. Suddenly the psychologists discovered that this rigorous attitude toward children was the basis of neuroses in later life. They decided that it was better to cuddle a baby when it cried than to let it cry until the clock said that it was time to be fed.

Actually the truth probably lies between what the psychologists said then and what they say now. In any case only a culture which has lost every sense of the depth and

complexity of the problems of life could seriously advance either the one or the other form of nursery discipline as a way of salvation for mankind.

Significantly these "scientists" are touching the fringes of the human problem but they do not know its dimensions. The problem of man is in his freedom and in the insecurity of his freedom. It is perfectly true that men are prompted by the insecurity of life to seek a false security for themselves. But the insecurity of existence is a little too deep to be covered up by a mother's uncritical love in the period of infancy. The freedom of the human spirit is such that it is able to justify undue forms of self-assertion either by claims to a security which it once possessed and now has lost or by its feeling that it has never had security but has the right to possess it. These contradictory nursery procedures are merely due to the "wise" men of our age inadvertently exploring two sides of the problem of freedom and security.

A fully "mature" individual must ultimately have some realization of the fact that in his frantic desire for security he has infringed upon the similar rights of others. That is the root of the uneasy conscience in man rather than the fancied religious dictum that his "normal" "urges" are bad. If he comes to terms with the realities of that uneasy conscience it may prompt him to both justice and humility. It will prompt him to justice if he seeks to abate his claims sufficiently to permit the gratification of the claims of others. It will prompt him to humility and charity if he recognizes that the tendency, which he discovers in others, to take advantage of the neighbor is also an inclination of his own heart. Again these modern wise men have stumbled upon the edge of a profound dimension of human experience. An uneasy conscience may make fanatics and self-righteous bigots of men. They seek desperately to prove how good they are by attacking the evil in others. That fanaticism is due to an unresolved feeling of guilt. But the common sense of mankind is a good deal wiser at this point

than the wise men. It knows that the guilt is real. It knows that men do take advantage of each other, and that each of us is involved in that guilt. Some of the fanaticisms which bedevil human experience are actually due, not to the "dreadful concept" but to the dreadful reality of guilt, of a guilt which has not been confessed or fully acknowledged. A Hitler and a Stalin are as ferocious as they are, partly because they know and partly because they do not quite know that their pretensions can not quite obscure their power-lusts either to their fellowmen or to their own conscience.

There are some dark and perplexing depths in the human spirit and there are also some majestic heights which have never been dreamt of in the philosophy of these apostles of nursery salvation.

The Blind Leaders

The scheme for world salvation through uncritical love of babies is only one of many vapid plans of redemption constantly being hatched by the wise men of our day, who can only be described as the "blind leaders of the blind." They speak pretentiously of the possibility of saving civilization through the insights of psychology and the social sciences. Yet it is precisely in these two sciences that the most nonsense is being generated. Much of the nonsense is much too silly to impress the common sense of the man in the street. He knows that human nature is more complex, its motives more ambiguous, its dignity more touched with misery than these wise men know.

Here is a psychologist who thinks that it is reassuring that human aggressiveness is not biological. That proves to him that it is socially derived and therefore capable of elimination by social means. It has not dawned upon him that human pride and the will-to-power may be neither biological nor social in origin. It may have its origin in the spiritual dimension of human existence, which the psychologist has ruled out *a priori*.

Here is a social scientist who assures us that we may have world government if we

are sufficiently resolute in desiring it. But he does not tell us what will happen if some one else is not as resolute as we. Nor has it dawned upon him that what we unconsciously fear sometimes refutes what we consciously will. In any case world community is not as simple an achievement as our wise men imagine. In one moment they look at man as little more than an animal. In the next moment they endow him with a universal mind, which will achieve complete universality as soon as their scheme of education is put into effect. Thus they obscure the finite limitations of human existence. They do not understand to what degree all historic communities have been created by organic forces, by kinship, geography, and a common language; and that they are not so simply the creation of the human will or the human mind.

This persistent misunderstanding of human nature by modern psychologists and social scientists belongs to the deepest pathos of our age. Either the full dimension of man's spirit is not recognized and he is reduced to the level of nature's forms of life; or his spirit is identified with mind and the anxious creaturely self which is in this spirit is obscured; or the spiritual dimension of human existence is falsely regarded as virtuous and it is not recognized that worst forms of human wrongdoing are spiritual; or the spiritual character of evil is recognized and falsely identified with "religion" and salvation is promised through the decay of religion.

Perhaps the difficulty arises from the fact that these wise men insist upon investigating human nature with scientific objectivity, which means that they will not look at themselves with introspective humility. They therefore do not know themselves. They know nothing about the treason in the human heart because they have evaded the fact that there is treason in their own. They are afraid of the law of love because they think such a law makes undue demands upon the naturally selfish self. They do not know that it is love as grace and not

love as law which is redemptive, which is to say that men are redeemed from self not by a moral compulsion but by various operations of common and special grace which draw men out of themselves into a larger selfhood.

Historically we live in a world in which evil and good are embattled in such a way as to illumine the terrible depths and the awful heights of the human enterprise. We even have some inkling of the fact that the dimension of this whole scene is so great that only the judgment and the grace of God can give it a frame of meaning.

But the wise men of our day insist that human nature is flat. They run about with little measurements which can measure whatever is irrelevant but do not touch the heights and depths which are relevant. If we should ever fall into the deep abyss of an atomic conflict, we may be quite certain that on the night before the conflict begins some psychological association will bestow a medal upon an outstanding scientist for having found the key to the problem of eliminating aggressiveness from human life.

The New "Fair Deal"

The Truman administration may not achieve all of the objectives which the President outlined in his program. But there was a sense of direction in his message and a feeling of confidence among his followers which accurately symbolizes the new mood of the nation. It is a nation which had thought of itself as destined to a pendulum swing to the right and was surprised to find that it was more deeply committed to the new philosophy of government, initiated in 1932 by Roosevelt, than anyone had believed. It is not as consistently a socialistic philosophy as the Republican opponents claim. Yet they are right in sensing that it is a challenge to the pure libertarianism which seemed to us and to Europe to have become the official creed of America. Europe is conscious of this also. For both in Britain and on the continent men rejoiced in the Truman

victory and interpreted it as a proof that America belongs to the same political and moral community as Europe and that it is not a museum piece of an outmoded *laissez faire* political economy.

It is interesting to note, incidentally, that the self-portraiture of America in recent years has agreed remarkably with what the Russians have said about us. Europe had come to believe that we were a kind of wilderness of "free enterprise" in which dog ate dog without restraint. One of the wisest of socialist leaders of Germany, who recently visited this country, returned from his visit rejoicing. He felt that he had much better ammunition against the communists than he had hoped to secure. He studied our Interstate Commerce Commission, our Federal Communications Commission, and other federal agencies. He talked with men like Chester Bowles, the new governor of Connecticut. The fact that our federal agencies surprised him proves what a wrong picture Europe has of our economic and social life. But it was also significant that he regarded Governor Bowles' program of "competent liberalism" as just about identical with what an unorthodox socialist of Europe would want to stand for. He was thrilled to think that there was a moral and social quality about American life which he had not suspected and which would enable him to present the powerful ally, upon whom the whole of Europe depends, not as a benevolent but ignorant monster, but rather as an intelligently ally in a common cause.

This rejoicing may be a little premature. We do not have an adequate housing program. We do not have any way of holding prices down except by the operation of the free market, which seems at the moment to be reducing them but also creating a very considerable amount of unemployment. Our civil rights program has not yet been enacted and we may expect some pretty hysterical opposition before it is. We are not likely to secure a taxation program which will overcome the inflationary tendencies which the Republican tax

reduction program initiated. We are not a highly disciplined people and we are still afraid that any modest form of discipline will destroy our precious "freedom." We still identify democracy with liberty, as if liberty were an end in itself or as if it guaranteed every value of justice and community. We are extravagantly libertarian not because, as our English critic Mr. Gorer believes, we are still rejecting the European father. We are a nation without a feudal past or a proletarian rebellion against a bourgeois world. The characteristic bourgeois ideas and ideals therefore have a more unqualified sway among us than any other nation.

But we are not as completely stupid as we thought we were. Our various commercial and industrial organizations still turn out their propaganda for free enterprise and the Advertising Council of America fills our radio with paeans of praise for our "free way of life" and its advantages over the way of every other people. But meanwhile we go ahead and try pragmatically to set up schemes of higher justice and restraints upon injustice. Mr. Truman's new "fair deal" is not subject to the charge made against Mr. Roosevelt's programs. It is not the improvisation of a brilliant politician. It merely articulates the desires and aspirations of the common people of America. They have a proper regard for liberty and they will not be catapulted into collectivism. But neither do they believe all this propaganda about the perils to freedom consequent upon the nation's use of its sovereign power to promote human welfare.

British Socialism

An American official of our Economic Recovery Administration was reporting to a group of American business men on the fruits of the recovery program in Britain. He had charts to show the dangerous position in which Britain found itself in 1947 with an export-import deficit of almost three billion dollars. He traced the origin of this situation and gave statistics to reveal

what part of the financial weakness was due to the war and what part to the almost catastrophic failure of the mining and textile industry, apparent even before the war. He traced the recovery of Britain in 1948 and showed how the dangerous deficit had been almost eliminated. This result had been achieved, he declared, partly by a rapid expansion of exports, particularly by the machine industry, and partly by reducing imports and holding general consumption to the lowest possible point. Did this mean that Britain was surviving primarily because a socialist government had reduced the consumption of everyone to the austerity level? No, was the answer. Britain was now consuming almost as much food as it did before the war. The austerity came from the fact that the food was more equitably distributed. Here were charts to prove that Britain's health is constantly improving.

How could Britain justify a food subsidy in its budget of two billion dollars per year?, was the next question. Without the subsidy, was the answer, food prices would rise, wages would have to rise, and an inflationary spiral would develop which would drive British goods off of the export market. The American business men popped question after question in a vain effort to prove their cherished belief that Britain was poor because it was socialistic.

The answers were obviously not inspired by any socialistic convictions, which the American official disavowed with complete honesty. He nevertheless left the strong impression that Britain was socialistic because she was poor and that without her socialistic disciplines she probably could not have survived the crisis. It was a very telling piece of propaganda for British socialism; all the more so because its purpose was quite another one. The purpose of the American official was to show that our American Marshall plan had completely justified itself, at least in as far as Britain was concerned. But he also proved that its effects had been much less salutary in nations less disciplined than Britain. That leaves the American free enterpriser with a nice dilemma. We are afraid that we are helping a European continent to become "socialistic." It turns out that our help is pretty well wasted in the non-socialistic nations and is effective in a socialistic one. Perhaps our particular kind of freedom is a luxury which we can afford but no one else can. In any event, our freedom, if it is the social virtue we claim, is the fruit of our fortunate circumstance; and not the other way around. The social discipline of Britain on the other hand, may well have been prompted by poverty; and the poverty is not the consequence of its social discipline.

VENTURES IN SOCIAL ACTION

By RUFUS CORNELSEN

To preach the Gospel is to do more than merely paraphrase the accounts and teachings of the Bible and decorate them with choice literary selections and stirring aesthetic imagery. It is to relate the whole scope of human existence, individual and social, its yearnings, ideals, achievements, frustrations, to the testimony of Scripture concerning God's will and man's rebellion, and the hope of reconciliation through Jesus Christ. It is meaningful and vital only as it is directly related to the contemporary scene and is an attempt at interpreting matters of human decision from day to day in the light of the Gospel.

This was my understanding of the task of the preaching ministry when six years ago I was ordained and assumed the responsibilities and duties of my present pastorate. I was also aware that the average Church member customarily deemed the discipline of the Gospel to apply to only a limited area of the practical life, and that he considered his attitudes and activities as a social being quite beyond its pale. It appeared obvious, therefore, that faithfully to discharge the duties incumbent upon my calling, by bringing the Gospel to bear directly on the social as well as individual morality of the parish, would lead either to a reorientation of ethical thinking, or to the antagonism of some of the faithful. The extent to which the former might be accomplished and the latter avoided would depend in some measure on the tact employed.

I had not served in my parish many months when I learned that it was not enough to apply the Christian faith to social questions in sermons from the pulpit and in talks before church organizations and classes. There was the need that my preaching and teaching be concretely interpreted

by my own leadership in social action, and implemented with actual projects and programs through which the people would learn by participation. It is with some such efforts and undertakings on my part, in an attempt to meet this two-fold need, that we are chiefly concerned here.

The nature of the parish and community to which this article refers is quite representative of the average situation. The congregation is Lutheran, and is located in New Brunswick, New Jersey. The communicant membership approximates 450, is lower middle class, about seventy percent Republican, and of various national backgrounds, with the majority of central and northern European stock. The members live scattered throughout a community of 50,000 population, that embodies most of the characteristics of a typical industrial center of eastern America.

It is quite obvious that the problems of social injustice presented in the race relations pattern of the normal American community are of immediate concern to the pastor interested in applying the Christian faith to public life. The clear moral character of these issues makes it natural that they be among the first to be brought under the focus of the Gospel. This was the case in my ministry. It was here that I first began grappling with the problems of public morality.

As one might expect, I began making applications in my preaching and teaching. This I tried to do with both tact and forcefulness. The two are not necessarily contradictory, although, I confess, I was not always successful in uniting them in a fruitful combination. I soon became convinced, however, that, even at its best, this was not enough, and resolved to supplement and interpret my words with a program of ac-

tion within the congregation as well as the general community. A few highlights of this program may help illustrate the nature of what was undertaken and indicate some of the results.

Just before the beginning of Lent one year I approached my good friend, the Reverend James Robinson, pastor of The Church of The Master, a Negro congregation in Harlem, and asked him to preach at one of the mid-week Lenten services in my Church. He agreed to come if my congregation were willing. I presented the matter to the Church Council, the official body of the parish. They consented, with some reluctance, to invite Mr. Robinson. Then I suggested that it would be a most charitable gesture to invite the members of the local Negro congregations to worship with us at that particular service. After a prolonged discussion this also was agreed to, but with considerable misgiving. My next step was to approach the Women's Missionary Society and inform them of the action of the Church Council, and challenge them to demonstrate the same spirit locally that they were so ready to pour out upon far away Liberia. Concretely this might mean to invite all those attending the service to an informal fellowship hour in the Parish House immediately following. These good women, and they are the salt of the earth, were happy for the opportunity and began to plan for the occasion.

As the time drew near many began to speculate about the number that might attend or stay away from this affair and whether any good could possibly come of it. The Missionary Society was reluctant to plan for a large number, since they had heard some of our people say that they did not object to having Negroes as guests at worship, but to mingle with them socially at the fellowship hour was neither wise nor desirable, and that Negroes themselves preferred to be with their own group. I urged them to make capacity preparations so that, if people refused to remain for the social, we could at least testify that as Christians we had expected them to stay.

This I supplemented by personally making the round of the Negro churches and inviting them to be our guests.

The service was held on the last Wednesday evening before Passion Week. The normal attendance of our own people at mid-week Lenten services was approximately 125. This time it was considerably larger and there were just as many more from the Negro congregations. The nave was filled to capacity. Mr. Robinson preached a great sermon on a Lenten theme. To the surprise of many he made no reference to race relations. Before the service dismissed I invited everyone present to stay for the social hour in the Parish House. Only a few left. There was not room enough around the tables for all. A number had to sip their coffee while standing wherever they could find space.

For the first twenty minutes as refreshments were being served the room was alive with conversation, everybody was busy getting acquainted, and some for the first time experienced the thrill of the soul breaking through the inhibitions of the color line. Then followed the next main feature of the evening program. I had previously asked our guest preacher if he would speak informally at the fellowship hour about his work in Harlem, and from that lead by indirection into a discussion of the general problem of the Negro in American society. He gladly agreed to the plan and, following my introduction, executed it masterfully. Everybody stayed. An open discussion followed in which both Negro and White freely participated. To my embarrassment the questions asked and the discussion engaged in by our guests were far more intelligent than that which came forth from some of my parishioners. The forum continued and all remained until eleven o'clock, when we finally dismissed. Still nobody seemed in a hurry to go and many stayed to discuss even longer. After the close, a member of my parish came to me and said, "My sister refused to remain for the social. I am going right home and will telephone her, even though she has

already retired, and tell her what a fool she was." I am sure that did more good than a hundred race relations applications I might have made in sermons.

A few weeks later I was visited by a young woman who had been present at this interracial gathering. She came to make a confession. Her story was about the attempts of management and the union of the factory in which she worked to bring in Negro workers and how she, along with others, had done everything possible to resist this move. But in spite of their opposition the colored workers had been employed. She then asked to be transferred to another department where there were no Negroes. However, in the meantime that she was waiting for her request to be considered by the proper authorities, she attended our special Lenten service. Her next two nights were sleepless. She had come to see how terribly wrong she was and how with her attitude and activities she had sinned against God and her fellowmen. "I found no peace," she said, "until I withdrew my request and told my friends of my change of heart. Now one of my best friends in the shop is a young colored woman who works beside me." I could not answer her except to say that I was sure there was rejoicing in heaven over this one sinner that repented.

It is not at all uncommon that in my regular pastoral visitation questions concerning the rights and privileges of the Negro and the Christian's attitude toward the Jew emerge in conversation. And this without any prompting on my part. I have found that people are anxious to discuss these questions. Some because they are ready to voice their agreement or disagreement with my interpretation of the issues, but many more because their thinking is confused and they are seriously seeking guidance, subconsciously at least, for the moral judgments they must make. And why shouldn't a pastor sympathetically discuss these matters with his people when he calls on them? They are individual and group moral problems that have deep

spiritual roots. Often they form the course through which the inner chamber of the soul may be approached and the Gospel of our Lord most vitally applied.

May I now digress a little from the congregational program of applying the Christian faith to life and relate a story which indicates how by the employment of proper strategy community patterns of segregation may be broken down or weakened. A certain theatre in metropolitan New Jersey (I prefer not to identify the community more specifically) discriminated against its Negro patrons by admitting them only to balcony seats. Soon after this was brought to my attention, a Negro friend and I decided upon a formula to work for a change in the theatre's policy.

Our plan was to accompany two young women to the theatre one night and attempt to gain admittance to the orchestra floor. We anticipated that, as there was only one Negro in the group and as I would be wearing clerical collar and vest, entrance might be obtained without too much embarrassment. A local paper was then informed of our plan and was asked for editorial support. We secured a promise that in case of admittance without discrimination, editorial comment praising the change in policy would be forthcoming. Next we got in touch with several sympathetic citizens and requested them to respond to the newspaper editorial with letters to the editor and to the theatre management, offering further public and private commendation of the new policy.

On the appointed evening, we proceeded with our strategy as planned. I approached the ticket booth and encountered no difficulty in purchasing admission for four. When I handed the tickets to the usher, he received them haltingly and his face strained with perplexity as we took our seats in the middle section of the orchestra floor. We stayed through the full double feature and were not disturbed, although the ushers circled several times, intently examining the four faces of our party, apparently to verify what they thought they

had seen in a moment of surprise. Evidently the clerical habit did the trick, for only the day before our Negro friend had been refused admission.

A few days later the promised editorial was published and soon after letters to the editor appeared, all acclaiming the changed policy. Complimentary letters and telephone calls were also received by the theatre management. What were they to do now? To continue the old practice in face of their new popularity would so highly dramatize their discrimination against the Negro that only damaging community disapproval could result. The only alternative was to adopt the new democratic policy with which they were already being credited. As common American business sense would dictate, they followed the latter course. This theatre has since continued to admit all Negro patrons without restriction to all seats in the house.

It may seem that I was here trying literally to fulfill Christ's counsel to his disciples; "Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." But that was not really my ambition. My only intention was to mobilize such public and private sentiment as was already convinced, either actively or passively, that our public patterns of segregation are highly immoral, and apply it concretely to this particular issue, hoping that it would bring some positive result.

The task of applying the Gospel to the industrial relations of a community is more difficult. The morally right or wrong in each specific instance is not as easily discerned, and the clergyman is often hampered by a lack of knowledge of the technical problems involved. But this, although it should inspire caution and humility, does not absolve him of the responsibility of making moral judgments. It is not necessary that he be a technical expert in order to understand the general trends and issues in our economic order, and be able to espouse them as they become articulate in situations in the local community.

In an attempt to keep my preaching Gospel centered, I have taken care never to deliver industrial relations lectures from the pulpit. But I have not therefore been hesitant from time to time to make moral evaluations of the economic policy of individuals and groups in our society. This I have tried to do tactfully, nevertheless concretely, at all times pointing to the Gospel as the standard by which our opinions and conduct are to be tested. Here again more than preaching is required.

In the course of making the round of first visits in the homes of my parishioners I endeavored to learn something about the nature of their employment and their views on the problems and issues connected therewith. I visited plants and shops in the community, in order to see first hand the character and conditions of their work, both as employers and employees. I talked with management, called at the headquarters of local labor unions, and made the acquaintance of their leaders. This I considered basic to an understanding of the daily life of my people, their problems and needs, the forces with which they contended, the influences to which they were subject, and the decisions they were called on to make. My interest in these affairs was at first looked upon with fascination and curiosity by the average member of the congregation: it was something new in his experience. Management viewed it with some suspicion. The leaders of organized labor welcomed it heartily.

Local labor leaders, apparently feeling that my interest was genuine, invited me to attend meetings of their local organizations, and from time to time requested that I address their general membership. This was followed by my appearance on the programs of county and state wide labor rallies, institutes, and conventions. I made an effort to comply with these invitations whenever possible. (Why should the businessmen's and women's clubs have the monopoly on a clergyman's extra-ecclesiastical speaking engagements?) In each in-

stance I spoke my mind freely, never purposing to pat labor on the back, but always striving to measure its specific demands as well as its long range program and philosophy in the light of what I understood to be the ethical implications of the Christian faith. Often I was told by important union executives that the labor movement could be greatly benefited by the kind of moral leadership and spiritual discipline that only an informed and sympathetic clergy might offer.

With increasing frequency, while making pastoral visits or meeting with congregational organizations, hints of curiosity concerning my interest in industrial relations would manifest themselves. I was always happy to draw this curiosity into open and frank discussion and explain that I was interested, not in spite of, but because of my faith, and that as a pastor in an industrial community I would be shirking my responsibility if I did not urge the people to see that God is keenly interested in what goes on in the shops and factories in which they work, and in how the wealth that is produced there is finally shared by all those who have contributed to its production. To many the implications of this answer differed so radically from their customary ideas about applying faith to life that they did not seem quite able to grasp its meaning. For some it was an eye-opener to a new vision of the relevance of the Christian faith. Others were troubled by its implications, and a few were antagonized.

A number of industrial as well as trades workers are included in the membership of my congregation. Whether active or inactive members of labor unions, or non-union workers in organized plants, they are in some measure, directly or indirectly, involved in collective bargaining, and from time to time in open disputes and work stoppages. In one instance several were out on a strike that extended through nearly eight months. As the unsuccessful negotiations preceding the strike were in process, I discovered that some of my parishioners employed in the plant took no part in the

activities and program of their union, were apathetic and confused regarding the issues in dispute, and cynical about collective bargaining generally. I also found that they did not attend union meetings and were almost totally ignorant of the general program and philosophy of the labor movement. As their pastor I met with them informally at different times for the purpose of examining the issues in the light of the spirit and teachings of Jesus Christ. We did this the best we could with the information we had available and prayed that God would give us both humility and courage in decision. I offered to go with them to the next general membership meeting of their union. All but one attended, and they seemed proud with self respect as union members when I was called to the platform to say a few words to the assembly.

With the breakdown of negotiations the threatened strike became a reality and continued for many weeks, apparently without any serious attempt at settlement. Inasmuch as more than 2000 workers were consequently unemployed, the dispute had become more than a private affair between management and the union. The entire community was affected. I thought, therefore, I would attempt to do something to bring the issues directly before the people for examination and evaluation, with the hope that it would arouse public sentiment to demand a resumption of negotiations. Fifteen community minded and influential citizens were invited to a meeting in a private home to discuss the question. It was decided to approach both the union and management, inviting them to appear at a public meeting to discuss the issues in dispute and give opportunity for the general community to ask questions of either party. Labor accepted the invitation with enthusiasm. Management, however, said it was no concern of the public and categorically refused to cooperate. Nevertheless, the meeting was held, with management conspicuously absent. Labor was there to present its case to a large gathering. The upshot of the whole venture was an aroused

public sympathy for the cause of the workers and a suspicion that management had a weak case. Whether or not it had anything to do with the resumption of negotiations soon thereafter or the final settlement some weeks later is difficult to determine.

Contemporary race and industrial relations do not present the only social problems with which the Christian conscience is concerned. There are many others. I have been well aware of this during my ministry and have not confined my interest and efforts to these areas alone. Limitation of space prevents my telling about the education and action program in international relations conducted on both the parish and community level. Projects with respect to

housing, health, cost of living, recreation, and other needs were also given consideration and in some cases initiated. In each instance an effort was made to keep under the discipline of the underlying objective, namely, to bring the matter at hand, as well as the individual or group decision that it might call for, under the focus of God's imperative as manifest in the Christian Revelation. The limited scope of this article and the few examples that it sketches purpose to be only indicative of what can be done in this respect on a much larger scale and in diverse ways, depending, of course, upon the nature of the parish and community.

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THE THEOLOGIAN IN POLITICS TODAY¹

By DANIEL JENKINS

Probably the most useful thing I can do is to say some things about our duty as theologians concerned with Christian duty in secular society with special reference to the British political situation. We have ample opportunity in Britain to be well-informed about politics and social life in the U. S. A. Commentators on the B.B.C. and in the newspapers explain endlessly to us all the complicated moves of your Presidential campaigns and all about the cost of living. In fact, since I have come to New York I feel definitely out of touch with American affairs. But I am not so foolish as to speak to an American audience on the basis of what professional commentators have seen fit to serve up in Britain about America, and you will expect no more than an occasional tentative suggestion of where our experience in Britain may be of interest to you.

I have two main points, but both of them will have various implications.

The first is that our political situation is such that it does not demand a revolutionary approach on our part as Christians. We live in a world where revolutionary changes are taking place and those changes influence us in innumerable ways, but our attitude in Britain to our internal affairs need not be, and in fact is not, revolutionary. There are, of course, many changes which Christians would like to see, but few would advocate a plan for the overthrow of existing political groups or institutions as the first condition of any change. Our task is as much one of maintenance and adaptation of existing forms of social organization as it is that of making changes. We may believe this because we are so identified with the existing order that we are unable to bring a radical Christian criticism to bear upon it. That is always

possible, but in this instance it can, at least, be claimed that Christian reasons can be given for our attitude.

To say that our situation is not a revolutionary one is not necessarily to imply that, since we now have a Labor government, the revolution has happened and a further one is unnecessary. On the contrary, I think that the situation would not have been greatly different if a Labor government had not come in after the last election. There are many good Christian reasons why the advent to power of the Labor party is to be welcomed, but it would be a naive Christian indeed who imagined that the Christian interest in British politics is to be identified with the Labor interest. The political and social order in Britain today has achieved a sufficient degree of justice and fair dealing between man and man to make the Christian determined to safeguard and maintain its achievements, and it has within it sufficient opportunities of self reform to make Christian reformers work within it rather than against it. There have been several points in the last thirty years when a revolutionary situation might have arisen, but through that curious combination of providential mercy and easy-going common-sense which has so often marked British history it never has arisen, and today it hardly seems to be anywhere on the horizon.

Now I may seem to be making unnecessarily heavy weather over a perfectly obvious point. Am I saying more than what is already well-known, that Britain is a democracy, with considerable respect paid to human rights and liberties? I am not saying much more than that but it is worth laboring it a little because many Christians are hampered from participating as effectively as they might in politics because of their reluctance to face frankly its implications. Christians have such an acute inferiority complex about the nature of

¹ This article was first presented as an address at last autumn's conference of the Frontier Fellowship in New York City.

their witness in society that they sometimes become more anxious to strike a dramatic attitude which will convince the Marxists and other romantics of how realistic they are than with soberly and critically trying to discern God's will for themselves. Within the common life of England, at least (and the same may be true of other Western lands) the picture we love to draw of a secularized society disintegrating in ruins, with a despised and rejected church in its midst ready and able immediately to offer to it the only sound basis for a workable existence, is nearly, if not quite, all eyewash. Let us agree with Demant and others that Western society is in the midst of a cultural crisis. It remains true, however, that the churches are as involved as the rest of Western society in that crisis and, on the whole, have as much freedom as anyone else to speak their distinctive word in relation to it. It cannot be claimed that our society is so far gone in rebellion against God and that the churches' witness is so unambiguous that we have any right to turn our backs upon it. In some ways English society is showing itself to be more Christian than it ever cares to admit to its parsons, and sometimes to be more Christian than the churches themselves. There are signs that in Britain today people are being more successful in co-operating with each other across barriers of class and status in political and industrial life than they are in the life of the churches. It is our custom to offer the Church as the means of integration to a society alleged to be rapidly disintegrating, whereas the truth appears to be that the common life of England is achieving some kind of new integration very rapidly, an integration from which the churches are left out as irrelevant except in the few instances where they have adjusted their method of working to a radically changed situation. A great institution like the House of Commons often shows more of the marks of its Christian origin than many assemblies of the churches, while the common law often shows a firmer grasp of

ethical reality than some of the church's accredited theologians.

I am aware that this is not the whole story, but it contains enough of the truth to make us ask ourselves whether we have not conceived our task too much in marginal terms. Many Christians have slipped into assuming that their responsibility is discharged if they point out to the modern world where it is going wrong or if they rush to the places where its casualties are found to do ambulance work. They have not admitted that Christians have much that is distinctive to do about keeping society itself going. Most of us have been guilty of this in one way or another. If we are young and earnest and perfectionist, the responsible fulfilment of the mundane tasks of everyday has held no attraction for us and we have found our vocation only in trying to work miracles at the United Nations or in passing resolutions saying that wars are bad things or in taking part in the more spectacular activities of the more publicized strikes. The result has been that the Christian laity, whom we exist to serve, have found us well-meaning and rather touching but in no sense relevant to the decisions that they have to take in their lives. Or if our interests are more intellectual and we are aware of contemporary currents of thought, we have found our vocation in making searching analyses of the plight of modern man and in indicating the irresolvable dilemmas with which he is confronted, without striving, as a necessary part of our function, to relate our inevitably partial and abstract analyses to the way in which ordinary people should be spending their lives. The result is that the Christian laity, whom we exist to serve, have been vaguely impressed and troubled by us, but because we have not helped them enough in making their actual decisions they have gone on in much the same way as before, only the more unhappily.

If it is true that our situation is not a revolutionary one, we theologians must have a much more humble and pastoral

attitude to our task. Too much of our work in relation to society has been a form of self-indulgence. Our civilization has not yet decisively repudiated its Christian origins. I believe that that is at least as true of America as it is of anywhere else. If it has not done so, we have no right to repudiate it in advance on its behalf. If grave internal as well as external dangers threaten it, as they most certainly do, it is our duty to make painfully clear to our brethren what they are and what it is possible to do to avoid them. At the same time, we must show that we appreciate that there is much that is precious in our civilization and that a great deal of time has to be spent in simply maintaining it in being. Nothing is more unhelpful than a theologian who retreats from a situation from which no retreat is either possible or necessary for his fellow-Christians. All that happens is that the Christian layman gets on with the job as best he can without the theologian. If he sometimes makes mistakes, all the blame does not necessarily attach to him. Sometimes, as I have already hinted, he may surprise the theologian by doing his job better than the theologian does his own.

That is my first point. Our situation in Britain is not a revolutionary one and we should move freely into it and take our full share of responsibility for it. But, positive though our attitude to society should be, it is essential that we remain critically-minded. That is my second point.

I realize that this again may sound trite but, once more, it involves more than is sometimes seen. It is much easier to be aware of the temptations and opportunities which confront the Church in a revolutionary age than in one in which relations between Church and state are relatively good. And in a time like the present, when many other churches are confronting revolutionary situations, it is very natural to interpret the unexciting stable situation in terms of the revolutionary one. That is why the utmost vigilance, honesty, and sense of reality are necessary in dealing

with both the English and the American situations today. Even though false prophets may heal the wounds of the people lightly, it is no mark of a true prophet to try to heal wounds which are not there, especially if in so doing they deflect attention from the real disease.

Theologians should feel a special responsibility in relation to this task of internal self-criticism today. It is always their job to do this, but it is partly because of the spectacular failure of those who preach and teach in the Church in this respect that the present crisis has overtaken the Protestant churches and the civilization they helped to produce. It is the fashion among enlightened theologians today to pour scorn upon the bourgeois Protestantism of our fathers. I have come increasingly to believe that a more humble and discriminating attitude towards them would become us. The society they created, even though it was capitalist and had all the abuses of capitalism, was basically a Christian society. The men who built it were men of deeper devotion than most of us. They professed to live by Christian standards and in some areas of life notably succeeded in doing so. Where that bourgeois Protestant society has failed most clearly has been in its faculty of self-criticism. But that self-criticism is primarily the task of its theologians, not of the industrialists and politicians upon whom we heap our abuse. P. T. Forsyth warned the Protestantism of the last generation that it was dying of its moral success. It succumbed to the one temptation which its heritage should have guarded it against, the complacency which produced self-righteousness. When the freest and most prosperous members of a fairly free and prosperous society were encouraged to make freedom and not justification by faith the distinctive principle of their theology, the way was made wide open for uncritical self-righteousness, and it was their theologians who were the head and front of their betrayal.

Looking back now we can see clearly what happened and can point out how

wrong our fathers were. But let us not deceive ourselves into believing that our ability to do this means that we are discharging our critical responsibilities. Most generations have been able to point out the faults of previous generations and no particular virtue attaches to it, a fact theological modernists have overlooked. The difficult task is even to realize what the distinctive temptations of our own generation are.

In England today it is imperative that we try to undertake this self-critical task in relation to Socialism and to all those related movements which consider themselves to be progressive and enlightened. One of the most deep-rooted illusions cherished by the Progressive is the notion that he is exempt from the operation of those laws of personal and social development whose inexorable working he is so quick to detect in his opponents, whom he castigates as Reactionaries. The natural tendency of all men as they grow older is to become more conservative, each in his own way. In itself, of course, that is not a bad thing. Life could hardly go forward unless the stable fabric of society were maintained by vested interests of all kinds. This fact only becomes dangerous when we refuse to allow the importance of any other fact, as so-called Reactionaries tend to do, or when we refuse to admit that it applies in our own case, as so-called Progressives tend to do. In one sense, the plight of the Progressive is more dangerous in these days than that of the Conservative, because the latter has so much opprobrium hurled upon his head that he has, at least, strong encouragement to become self-critical, while the former has every encouragement to become self-righteous. Thus there is no conservatism more obdurate, slow-moving, and censorious than that of the Progressive who has grown old in his progressivism, especially if he has been for long without the discipline of responsibility. Further, it is of the very essence of Socialism in particular that, once it has attained to power, it becomes strongly conservative in temper.

Centralized control in a highly organized technological society must mean social conservatism for the most obvious of practical reasons. Once you have gone to the immense labor of establishing a national health or transport organization you are not going to be particularly anxious to listen to those who come along advocating new reforms which will undo your work especially if it means the dismissal of officials for whom no alternative work is available. State socialism, once it is effectively established, creates the most powerful of vested interests. It creates many of the problems of conservatism at its worst, made the more difficult because its exponents so frequently fail to see this fact.

Only the most vigilant internal self-criticism can save Socialism from corruption once it attains to power. A new Christian critique of Socialism is badly needed today, which both points out the limitations and dangers confronting Socialism in the day of victory and re-affirms, in a purified form, the original positive ideal behind the Socialist movement. On the first point, it is obvious that any state which becomes Socialist is giving hostages to fortune. If power is to be centralized, everything depends on whether there is enough self-discipline, vigilance and sense of public responsibility among leaders and people to make power subserve the public good. Many of the leaders of the Labor government have been very alarmed by the fact that Britain has voted for Socialism without counting the moral cost, and there is no doubt that the moral cost is very high. This is not an argument against Socialism as such. It is surely clear that some kind of centralized control is inevitable in modern society as you in America recognize as well as we do. The moral cost of the kind of civilization we have today is very high and there is no escaping it. What is vital is that theologians should not encourage Socialist politicians, and people in general in the notion that a Socialist order of society is a substitute for moral effort. That is a platitude but it is a platitude that needs

iteration with ceaseless patience and imagination. Christopher Hollis, a very able Conservative politician, has pointed out with considerable sympathy and wit, how the Socialist government have consciously or unconsciously taken to themselves all the privileges of a governing class and given all the arguments of a governing class for doing so. His conclusion is that such things are inevitable and that the Socialists should come off their high horse and admit it. There is some truth in that, but I do not think that if this government, overpressed as it is, had been more vigilant with itself there need have been as much truth as there is. Certainly a few gestures like a reduction in Cabinet Ministers' salaries and less lucrative jobs for the Trade Union boys in the new corporations would have helped to keep a few ideals alive. In the same way, popular slogans need constant scrutiny to see whether they cover the facts. We congratulate ourselves on increasing 'equality of opportunity' in education, when what is already happening is that children of educated parents, who are educational capitalists, have a flying start in competition for the generously provided state scholarships and bursaries. The result is that it is not the poorer workers but the poorer professional classes who will chiefly benefit by the new educational structure. Once again, I do not mean to say that that in itself a bad thing. But it needs constant critical examination, and it is difficult for the parsons and teachers and trades union officials whose children benefit from such an arrangement to examine it dispassionately.

Secondly, the Socialist movement is today hungry for a restatement of its fundamental beliefs, which will illumine its long range policy and sustain its faith. It has never been Marxist, and it is now less so than ever, although part of the fire that burned in the soul of Karl Marx found its way into the movement. Now it is turning away increasingly from the secular rationalism which was the ideology of its intellectuals but was never the driving force

behind the rank and file, who were imbued either by vague Christian idealism or by a simple determination to improve their lot. Socialism realizes that it is personalist and not totalitarian and that its aspirations are somehow allied to Christianity, and it realizes little more than that. The influence of the theological movement of Christian Socialism has always been greater in text-books of church history than in the actual history of the Labor Party. I do not know whether Christian theologians can restate the positive ideal of Socialism in such a way as to win the allegiance of the movement, but I am sure the time is propitious for an attempt. Reinhold Niebuhr has told us that modern industrialism has taken away his skill from the workman but given him the opportunity to create an incomparably richer community life. What that community life could be in a modern industrialized society and how that could be related to the common life of the people of God is a question that might very profitably occupy theologians concerned with secular society.

We need then a critique of Socialism today, but we also need an analysis, equally critical and constructive, of the part which explicitly conservative forces should play. We are so frightened of being thought obscurantist that we often shamefully neglect this part of our task, yet it is no less important than the other. In the first place, our situation is not a revolutionary one. Broadly speaking, the conservative forces in Britain are prepared to play in with the rest of the community. We are still a democracy and a democracy cannot exist without an opposition party which can be ready at a moment's notice to form an alternative government. And it can only form an alternative government if the other forces in the country have enough respect for it and common cause with it to be prepared to live under it. A Socialist party which is determined to maintain the country as a democracy when it reaches power very particularly demands a Conservative party which has enough confidence in it not

to undo all its work when it returns to office. Class war is for that reason the deadliest enemy of democratic socialism and a responsible liberally-minded Conservative party is an imperative necessity in a socialist society.

In the second place most church people are conservative. That is as true in America, where all your leading laymen appear to be corporation lawyers, as it is in Britain. It is, therefore, pastorally as well as politically irresponsible for us to lose interest in the conservatives because our own political preferences lie elsewhere. It may be, indeed, that in some situations we as theologians must have the grace to accept the fact that we can do more good by helping the conservatives act responsibly than by trying to illumine the task of the progressives. We may cut a fine figure in our own eyes and in those of our left wing friends by ostentatiously preaching Socialism as Anglican vicars in towns on the South coast of England or as Presbyterian ministers in Westchester County, but it is at least questionable whether we best serve God and our congregation and the true interests of Socialism itself in that way.

When I say this, of course, I am not for one moment suggesting that we should become the uncritical sounding boards of conservative prejudice. There are quite enough theologians doing that already, both in England and America. I am saying that conservative groups have an essential part to play in society and that it is important that they play it responsibly and not otherwise. It is notoriously difficult for the rich man to enter the kingdom of God. It is even more difficult when he is becoming poorer and in danger of being swept away, and he needs our help. Even if it is true that the self interest of the masses coincides more with the needs of justice than does that of the wealthy at present, it may not always be so. After all the conservative is in a good position to see the truth of the fact that the combination of economic and

political power in the same hands is a grave threat to human freedom, and the fact that it serves his self-interest to say so does not invalidate its truth. The question, 'How can a man be a responsible conservative in a society where changes are inevitable' is one which troubles many good Christians, and they have a right to expect constructive answers and not gibes from their pastors when they ask for it. It is the more important that some of us begin asking that question now because Socialism in power becomes so quickly conservative, a fact which may force the conservatives to become the radical party—a prospect to fill one with horror unless a great deal of educational work is done quickly.

I realize that in many important respects our political situation in Britain differs from yours here. You do not have a Socialist government. We do not have to face the complicated problem of the future composition of your party organizations. But I am sure that in both countries our theologians must see their task in substantially similar terms. It is not in most instances our task to withdraw from politics nor yet to become politicians, running a particular line of our own. It is our task to stand alongside our people as they struggle to do their duty in the political realm, helping them to see their party loyalty in the setting of their obedience to the will of God. We need to see our task as a distinctively ministerial one, on the intellectual as well as on the personal level. Politicians should be able to look on us not as one more pressure group to be placated, but as friends who see things in a different perspective and who can help and illumine them in their very difficult task. They need our prayers and our sympathetic and informed and critical companionship much more than they need our resolutions and reports and assemblies. I am quite sure that many of them are ready to welcome us eagerly if we go to them in that way.

CHRISTIAN ETHICS AND THE ATOM BOMB

By EDWARD LEROY LONG, JR.

The revolutionary implications of modern scientific discoveries centering around the atom bomb run far deeper than commonly supposed. Atomic bombs, biological warfare, and discoveries not yet known to the public combine to make old problems newly pressing. They witness in stark fact to the truth that technical newness does not overcome spiritual backwardness, and force reconsiderations of the ethical assumptions with which we have long tried to handle the problem of power. There is more to be said about these discoveries than the often made, and only partly true, statement that the urgency they give to ethics will force mankind into willingness to accept moral duties heretofore left unfulfilled. No promises seem bright in a time when the singular embodiment of atomic power is an atom bomb, and that atom bomb is in an unstable world. The possibility of chaotic destruction so far overshadows the residual constructive promise of atomic discovery that uneasiness and even fear are the predominant moods of this time.

A paper of this sort is not a treatise on the impact of the atom bomb upon theology in general (such a consideration needs to be made), nor is it merely an examination of the arguments for, or against, the justification of past, or possibly future, uses of the atom bomb. The very structure of an ethical system must be examined to assess its adequacy to meet the issues presented by the bomb; it will be a main purpose of this treatment to show that the Christian ethic can fulfill this demand. Even as we consider the Christian ethic as against others, we shall need to delineate a Christian ethic by critical evaluation of the various approaches within the faith.

Implications of the Bomb's Development

The development of the bomb illustrates the tragic context of ethical choice. The scientists who worked on the bomb are quick to point out that the making of an atom bomb by the United States was in face of German (and less crucially, Japanese) efforts to split the atom. It was an incessant door-to-door lobby of scientists that woke a lethargic Congress and Administration into full consciousness of the threat which Axis research on atomic energy posed. The historical situation of the Second World War forced the making of a bomb in this decade; many of the scientists engaged reluctantly in the enterprise and hoped to prove the impossibility of splitting the atom in such a manner as to produce a bomb; they knew the misery and horror which would come from success.

Had the scientists, as did a few, refused to help make an atom bomb, they would have equal cause for dissatisfaction with their choice, particularly had it led to Axis victory. No perfectionistic ethic can eclipse the depth of the problem, either by saying with shallow militarist that the making of the bomb was perfectly right, or with shallow pacifist that it was absolutely wrong. The problem raised by the bomb's development is an extreme case illustrating how all ethical choice confronts us. Any ethic must reckon with the tragic if it is to be meaningful.

A second characteristic of the bomb's development has been less recognized. The bomb was produced by the combined activity of many people, most of whom were unaware of the exact nature of their activity. They knew they were part of the war effort, but under a military cell system of security a Frankensteinian project was

possible where consent to be employed involved ignorance of the task to be performed. Though akin to the impersonalization of science, where participation in production gains less and less moral meaning, this new development is of a different nature. It was not until after the use of the bomb that the great mass of workers involved could challenge the use in the name of its effect on international order pro or con. This is a new problem, combining, on the level of planning, scientific genius and military control without the intermediary factor of business and economic power as interested agents.

Thirdly, the development of the bomb raises an issue regarding the capacity of total war to preserve order. We must assess as best we can the destructive implications of the bomb. The factors which could aid in doing this are either secrets or matters of intense debate. Atomic scientists divide into two groups in passing judgment upon the bomb; one group assumes that the bomb is an instrument making it possible for mankind to bring existence as we know it to an abrupt end; another group believes the atom bomb to be roughly analogous to a new gun, for which means of defense can be devised. We note that the first group is most interested in campaigning for world government; the second is anxious to avoid suggesting that science has posed too great a problem. The scientists agree to point out that the bomb is much more powerful than any explosive weapon previously known, that it is small in relation to its power, and that its power is a product of destroyed matter rather than matter whose form has been changed with a consequent release of energy. We are also informed by the scientists that bombs are rendered obsolete as fast as produced, and that the speed of production and research is outstripping all reasonable predictions.

The development of all weapons of most recent origin makes up a situation which places the destructive capacity of scientific war in a different category from that of old

fashioned pistol duels and musket battles. This conclusion involves considerations of a social and moral nature as well as a technical one. If the means of defense against the atom bomb force mankind into caves, civilization as we know it may be altered. If one nation (even the United States) finds itself conqueror of a whole world through the use of atomic power, moral and ethical structures of civilization would probably be shaken by the corruptions of absolute power.

When one considers the fact that the atom bomb changes matter itself into energy, we may question with great seriousness the taking of physical existence as a fixed datum of ethics. The destruction of a small amount of matter has been shown to cause the rearrangement of a large amount of matter into mere debris. Destruction of life and order do not need to wait for all matter to be destroyed, but only for enough to be converted into energy to upset the fine balances upon which the physical arrangements which make man's life possible depend. For all reasonable purposes it appears correct to hold that in a situation where both sides had the dubious advantage of using atomic weapons, the mutually inflicted damage would result in the destruction of the orders of civilization of both countries, and probably of all that stood between them.

One further consideration may be helpful to the argument. The theory that the atom bomb will find itself assimilated into the warfare of mankind, and that defenses will be devised against it, presupposes opportunity to devise a defense. Defensive measures are developed after new weapons not before. The indications are, when the destructive capacity of the bomb is surveyed, that at some point in the development of future weapons an offensive power can be unloosed capable of destroying civilization before a defense is found. The bomb did not achieve this dubious distinction, but there is no assurance that its future forms may not. Is it not wise to

side, therefore, with the scientists who take a radical view of the bomb's implications? The presupposition of the argument from here on will be based upon this conclusion.

The Past Use of the Bomb

It ought not to be necessary to defend at length the report of the Calhoun Commission in which the unannounced bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were judged "morally indefensible." For readers here, familiar with the unity of thought supporting this judgment and the issues involved, we can confine our remarks to some pertinent observations.

In the first place we must guard against using the judgment that the development of the bomb was necessary (in face of Axis research on the atom) as an excuse to justify its use over the two Japanese cities. The bomb was finally used in full recognition that Japan did not possess it and after Germany had been defeated. The making of the bomb has connotations of practical necessity, if not of moral ones; the use of the bomb lacks these. That in much popular apologetic, the use and making are not clearly separated, and one is used to defend the other, shows clearly the tendency of warfare to blur the moral distinctions which support it from the first. This nation used the bomb for purposes different from those prompting its initial manufacture.

Pleas that the bomb saved lives by shortening the war speak more directly to the point. There has been no little disagreement as to how much the bomb hastened the Japanese surrender and thus actually did save lives. Even if the bomb did save some lives, but cost the moral leadership which is essential to world peace and world control of atomic weapons, the long range effect may raise doubts as to the wisdom of the short term policy. In any case we must guard against the all too common tendency to forget the qualitative difference between the lives of defenseless victims and those of armed combatants—a distinction we had greatly lost through callousness to obliteration

bombing prior to the atomic issue. Had a demonstration on barren waste of the power of the atom stopped the war and saved lives, then indeed the excuse for Hiroshima and Nagasaki is a snare and delusion.

The decision to drop the bomb was definite and calculated. President Truman was advised by a civilian committee of high calibre. They rejected a prior demonstration of the bomb made on an uninhabited area of Japan on the grounds that a dud might cause an announced demonstration to become a laughing stock, and that such a demonstration would lack the dramatic character of the attack on a city. They justified the second bombing on the grounds that it was required to show that the first one was not a freak, and that our threats of more to come were not hollow. The decision to reject a demonstration was made in opposition to a petition from atomic scientists asking that a demonstration first be made—a petition *Newsweek* reported addressed to the President but held up by the Army.

In regard to the use of the bomb in the Bikini tests there have also been conflicting views. These tests were made to determine the effect of the bomb upon warships rather than for scientific data about the bomb itself and means of improving it. The scientists were largely opposed to the tests on the grounds that they were possible "baits" toward Russia, and that the results would minimize the danger of the atom bomb in the minds of the American people and undercut the campaign for world government which the scientists were currently carrying on. Whether it was wise or necessary to run the risk of throwing additional suspicion into the international situation of 1946 (when the armed camps into which the world is now drawn were not as clear cut as they are today) is an open question from any point of view. The suggestion then current that a venture of trust in sharing the United States monopoly of the bomb would allay the growing suspicion between East and West, and have pre-

vented today's impasse, is not as wild as the rereading of history with our present suspicions might suppose.

The reaction of the scientists in America has generally been critical of the undemonstrated use of the bomb; the reaction of foreign scientists has outstripped them in the intensity of their condemnation. C. V. Raman, an Indian scientist, bluntly says the "scientists should have refused to have helped in the production of the very wicked bomb." French scientists Auger and Curie have been most vocal in condemning American action. The reaction of Christian thought has been significant in uniting pacifist and non-pacifist thought in criticism of the bomb's use. Unlike the scientists however, the criticism was severest at home, as a comparison of British and American Council reports will show. One may deduce from this contrast what he can, but it may show a freedom of the gospel to transcend particular loyalties and make possible a humble self-scrutiny.

While the religious reaction has been critical, and the scientific reaction at least questioning, the attitude of "the public" has in general accepted the atomic bombings without a sense of guilt as a perfectly justified act of war. A Report made by the National Service Board for Religious Objectors notes that 6/7ths of those polled approved the bombings, comparing this with the fact that 1/2 of the same group would sanction poison gas. That the poll reflects lay thought in the main is probable, and the divergence between contemporary thought in theology and lay secular attitude in general is undoubtedly evidenced here.

The Bomb in the Hands of One Nation

This section treats the ethical problem of the present situation. It would be less realistic if it did not recognize the problem of Russian power and Russian obstructionist tactics in the deliberations of the United Nations. But Russia is a specific case of the general problem—that of a nation apparently unwilling to participate in good

faith in international order and atomic control.

In the negotiations with Russia concerning atomic energy the situation may be briefly analyzed as follows: Russia insists the United States give up the bomb secret as the price of bargaining; the United States feels a sense of trusteeship, and will not give up the secret before an international agreement can control it. The United States proposal for international control was a broad one involving a balance of power among several states, and precluding the right of one state to manufacture atomic bombs illegally by maintaining a veto power in the security council. Russia wanted limited inspection and the veto power maintained. An impasse resulted in a complete breakdown of negotiations in early April of 1948.

We must not believe that it was merely the monopoly of the United States which forced Russia into her position, and that she would have accepted our proposals had we destroyed our bombs. On the other hand we must not fail to recognize that Russia's attitude is partly based upon fear of American atomic power, whatever else may lie behind it. The inability of man to break vicious circles by mere negotiation is beautifully illustrated by the impasse in which the United Nations finds its atomic energy negotiations. We should be sobered by the fact that the impasse is a political defeat rather than an inconsequential failure. The present state of affairs is a victory for those seeking nationalistic development of atomic energy at the expense of realistic international control.

It remains a fact that the United States has been, and is, stockpiling atomic weapons. It has rejected, probably wisely, a venture of destroying the atomic stockpile without adequate international controls. But our present power adds to international tension, and also to a false sense of our security. The bomb complicates the international situation in many ways, and perhaps the best that can be said for the present is that we can hope that it will enable a

balance of power to be maintained until tensions can be overcome and the present situation settle itself.

Whatever be the analysis of the factors above, it seems one position could be taken by Christians as an agreeable attitude toward the bomb. They should oppose any suggestion that our sole possession of the bomb should be seized upon as an opportunity to engage in a quick war against Russia in a preventive measure of cutting out the cancer before it is too late. On a crude "survival of the fittest" basis this might be defended, but any Christian able to reduce prudentialism to this level is partaking of current hysteria.

The outcome of the Berlin situation may be coercive action stemming from entirely different considerations than those above. Even so, we cannot fail to view with deep alarm the possibility of one-sided use of atomic bombs. Such use threatens the moral fibre, not the physical existence, of the contemporary world. It seems doubtful that any nation could conquer the world in widespread use of atomic weapons and maintain its moral integrity, and no nation could survive the corruptions of power stemming from world conquest. Particularly if started aggressively, and even if developed responsibly, atomic warfare in the hands of one nation is a possibility which can be contemplated only with horror.

For a Christian unable to believe our destruction of the bomb would net world peace, and yet unable to support a mere prudentialism devoid of moral demand, the situation furnishes no neat answer. His actions will be designed to witness against all hasty action and all neat promises of easy cures. The neatest sounding cure is the most dangerous—the proposal that we solve the Berlin crisis by bombing Moscow with U-235.

The Bomb in the Hands of Two or More Nations

It is when we are faced with the possibility of full scale atomic conflagration that

our most radical ethical problems arise. It is when two or more nations gain control of the bomb that atomic destruction will be possible. To discuss this section may be to over-anticipate an issue and tie our hands in the present juxtaposition of power—thus hastening atomic aggression. Both Council reports refrained from these considerations on the grounds that threat to use atomic weapons may be necessary to prevent their use. But the same threat may spur an armaments race and create suspicion, and we may take as a given factor the continued stockpiling of atom bombs. Viewed vocationally, Christian ethics has little influence on social policy; some anticipation of ultimate issues will not hurt.

The atom bomb plays havoc with all merely prudential ethical decision. It plays havoc with a prudential pacifism—one expecting widespread and personal refusal to use force to establish peace. It does this because of the Frankensteinian possibility of precluding conscientious objection as effective social policy. This is in addition to the usual fact that disavowal of the use of force gives no guarantee that opponents will not take advantage of such action. On the other hand the bomb challenges all prudential non-pacifism, for in as much as its destructive implications are as great as we have suggested, the use of force no longer will be apt to preserve order when used in full scale war. The pacifist claim, heretofore a tentative judgment that the use of force destroyed more than it preserved, now has achieved a new poignancy. Even as it makes possible a world state with absolute power, the bomb is a herald of the eventual destruction of all certain reliance upon schemes of historical fulfillment relying solely upon calculative and prudential bases of action.

We may see by careful consideration of atomic threat that we cannot rely ultimately upon calculation. This is to bring to ethics the same leap of faith which much contemporary theology (in challenge of reason by reason) brings to doctrine and re-

ligious epistemology. It is necessary in face of the implications of the atom bomb to find the validity of the vertical dimension in ethics—even radically conceived. Obedience to ethical ideals must ultimately find vindication beyond consequence and independent of success. This carries us close to the ethic of the New Testament including its eschatological dimension.

This being said, there still remains the problem of relating the demands of calculation to the ultimate demand of obedience—not forgetting that neither can be fully served. The atom bomb implies a situation where reliance on the calculative use of force is less and less possible, and ultimately impossible. A Christian ethic which lays aside *agape* as an ultimate norm for the sake of such calculation (not all militarism among Christians does this; some is plain jingoism) must currently examine its thinking to ascertain if we have not already, or will not soon, reach a point where the substitution of a proximate norm (in the war issue) is no longer defensible on calculative grounds, and must be ready to affirm the meaning of ethics apart from its calculative value.

This author sees the atom bomb moving closer and closer to the indirect vindication of a vocational pacifist position taken in faith and not in claim of responsibility. Such a position, espoused not as a workable way, but as obedience to an ultimate ideal, is challenged less and less by the claim of calculative responsibility as this claim relies

upon greater and greater instruments of destruction.

There are those who will not draw the line implied above, either for a present position or at any future time. Since the ultimate quality of Christian ethics is a soul before God (not a man with a slide rule) their position is as defensible as any other provided its vertical vindication is maintained. A "militarist" position taken in obedience can possibly be demanded; who can be certain either way? How many are too certain! In no position does man avoid the necessity of humility, the ambiguity of tragic choice, and the need of grace. A vocational pacifist may act irresponsibly towards the problem of justice in the present, but he may avoid the dilemma of a calculative ethic unable to calculate, or a jingoism which can result only in atomic suicide.

In any case faith must be presupposed. Where it is not, and worldly categories are alone relied upon, life will end in futility. In a rich sense ethics must be partly "otherworldly"; apart from this reference which is not escape, but security for action and recognition of human finitude, there is only futility for the future. If we see this especially to utilize it for wild and creative leaps, we may be saved in history as well as beyond it. If we are driven to despair by the depth of the present problem, and the proving inadequacies of secularism we have long relied upon, we cannot be other than lost.

BOOK REVIEWS

CHRISTIANITY AND COMMUNISM.
By John Bennett. New York: Association Press, 1948. 128 pp. \$1.50.

This well-timed publication is another instance of the balanced and clear thinking we have learned to expect from John Bennett. Russophiles and Russophobes may both be impatient with the caution with which Bennett keeps his moral ledger, on the debit and credit side, in his estimate of Communism as of Christianity. Yet it is just here that the book performs its greatest service. For in the face of hysterical thinking which falls into black-and-white judgments, Bennett delineates the crucial degrees of gray. For the college-age reader this book provides the clearest guidance now at hand in these days when the issues of decision and action are being joined.

In setting forth the ideals of Communism, Bennett rightly distinguishes its various levels, from Marx and Engels through to the Stalinist, nationalized power-philosophy. He corrects the popular fallacies by which Communism is out-of-hand condemned, particularly the myth that it is absolutely relativistic and morally cynical. Bennett is right, I think, in pointing out that what appears to be moral relativism is in reality the substitution of a new absolute for the traditional ones of Western Christendom. Bennett pays fair tribute to the moral seriousness of Marxism, its passion for social justice, and its valid ethical criticism of capitalistic democracy. Then he turns about to attack severely the totalitarian ruthlessness of its method.

The deepest conflict between Christianity and Communism, Bennett claims, is to be found: (1) Where Communism absolutizes itself in idolatry, and loses thereby the power of self-criticism and correction. Both the false optimism of its philosophy of history and the truculence of current Russian foreign policy stem from this pretentiousness. (2) Where Communism justifies

tyrannical and ignoble means to secure its "ideal" end. The fact that the behavior of "Christian" nations comes under this same judgment is no ground for leniency in judging Russian method here. And further, amid all the necessary compromises in means which "Christian" nations make, particularly in wartime, there is never lost the "regard for the enemy," a regard for which Communism has no room. On the means-and-ends problem, this difference between the two faiths is the most far-reaching. (3) Finally, the estimate of human personality derived from the Christian theonomous view stands in sharp contradiction to the "depersonalized" Communist view of man. (Here Bennett generally parallels the views of Maritain and Berdyaev.)

In the final chapters of the book, the author sketches the scheme of faith and practice which is the "Christian answer" to the Communist faith, an answer which is the more imperative because of the trenchant criticism which Communism has made of a socially irresponsible Christianity. The orthodox doctrines of man as creature of God and as sinner, as neither utopian nor despairing as to the outcome of historical effort, as "justified by faith," and as committed to a community of faith, the Church, which stands as a bulwark against totalitarianism—these tenets are primal. From the vantage point of this faith, the Christian, while himself under judgment, yet can set a yardstick of judgment against Communism as well as against capitalism and democracy. That the faith of Christianity is so inimical to Communism is no ground for equating it with capitalistic democracy. The Christian perspective, transcendent of all of these, must yet make judgments of relative worth among them, judgments which may involve decision and commitment which can be both hearty and critical.

As one of the Haddam House series, this book is written for the undergraduate

mind. But its popularizing purpose does not lead Bennett into over-simplification, or the flattening out of important subtleties. To be sure, the book is less profound (as well as less mystifying) than Berdyaev's excursions in this field. And to be sure, Bennett's valiant effort to make plain the Protestant doctrine of "justification by faith" and the "gospel of forgiveness" (pp. 90-94) is quite too slight and simple to do much justice to those exceedingly baffling concepts. But, with this exception, the book well fulfills Bacon's dictum: "to think with the learned and speak with the vulgar."

It is intended as no slight on Bennett's contribution to point out that the salient doctrines of the Christian faith which he feels must be espoused as the basis of criticism not only of Communism but of the practice of contemporary Protestantism, are almost entirely those which Niebuhr has been recovering for modern Christian thought. That Bennett is so beholden to Niebuhr takes away not one whit from his original and, I think, unsurpassed ability to rehearse these doctrines in systematic and straight-forward fashion, without the sort of elusive dialectical style which is likely to throw the theologically-unsophisticated reader into a tizzy. In its presentation of subtleties in such ordered, illuminating, and readily-comprehended fashion, this book stands as one of Bennett's best. And in the absolute rigor with which it applies Christian judgments to "us" as to the "enemy" it is thoroughly in the prophetic tradition.

WALDO BEACH

THINKING CHRISTIANLY. *By W. Burnett Easton, Jr.* New York: Macmillan, 1948. \$2.50.

POWER FOR ACTION. *By William A. Spurrier.* New York: Scribner, 1948. \$2.50.

These two volumes, by authors familiar to many readers of this journal, seek to set forth in plain English for theological lay-

men some of the ideas and insights of Christian faith, especially as interpreted in recent currents of theological thought. The names of Niebuhr, Barth, Brunner, and Berdyaev appear often in the text and footnotes. Easton's book deals largely though by no means exclusively with specifically religious problems, while Spurrier's bears the subtitle, "an introduction to Christian ethics." Both books demonstrate that Christian theology implies an ethic, and that Christian ethics presupposes theology.

Easton's book describes "thinking Christianly" as thinking about the Bible as the Bible brings us to hear "a voice not ourselves in the existence of which we dare not disbelieve." It is thinking about Christ as the revelation of God, and its basic quality is complete trust in God. The application of this kind of thought to such problems as prayer, death, and evil is done with accurate insight, and also with a wealth of practical applications and illustrations. The chapter on death is particularly illuminating, and serves to show how far short of "thinking Christianly" much ostensible Christian thought falls.

This is in short a good book to put into the hands of someone who wants to begin the enterprise of thinking biblically. He may soon grow beyond it, but I think the author's purpose will be accomplished in the successful start he will make on the path.

Spurrier's book is a statement of ethical principles derived from the teachings of Jesus, as they apply both to personal ethics and to social problems. At many points the author is remarkably successful in illuminating a difficult theological concept by a striking figure of speech or an apt illustration. At other points the expository contains flaws or inadequacies which mar the effect of the book. For example, the treatment of Judaism in the first chapter seems to this reader to be particularly inadequate. At many other points, the author opens up a problem with real insight, only to pass on to something else before finishing it off.

HAVE YOU READ THESE BOOKS BY MEMBERS OF THE FRONTIER FELLOWSHIP?

- Bennett, *Christianity and Communism*, (Association Press), \$1.50
Bonthius, *Christian Paths to Self-Acceptance*, (Kings Crown Press), \$3.25
Easton, *Thinking Christianly*, (Macmillan), \$2.50
Eckardt, *Christianity and the Children of Israel*, Kings Crown Press, \$3.75
Heimann, *Freedom and Order*, (Scribners), \$3.00
Jenkins, *The Gift of Ministry*, (Faber and Faber), \$2.00
Kean, *The Meaning of Existence*, (Harper), \$3.00
Knox, *On The Meaning of Christ*, (Scribners), \$2.50
Miller, *The Christian Significance of Karl Marx*, (Macmillan), \$1.75
Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, (Scribners), \$5.00 (1 vol. ed.)
Faith and History, (Scribners), \$3.00
Shinn, *Beyond This Darkness*, Association Press, \$1.00
Spurrier, *Power for Action*, (Scribners), \$2.50
Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, (Chicago), \$4.00
The Shaking of the Foundations, (Scribners), \$2.50
Wygal, *Reflections of the Spirit*, Woman's Press, \$2.00

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The chapters on social ethics are of varying value. For example, the chapter on economics successfully sets the economic enterprise in a religious and moral framework, and it eloquently states what Tillich has called the 'religious reservation' which draws the fangs of intolerance from social discussion and action. But it does not go on to any more positive discussion of the relation of Christian faith to economics. One misses, for example, any discussion of what have been called the "middle axioms" which might serve to throw a bridge across the gap which still yawns in many minds between ethics and economics. The treatment of sex and marriage, on the other hand, strikes this reader as singularly adequate. It brings Christian ethical principles into touch with concrete human situations in a manner that combines imagination and good sense.

These books are attempts to cultivate the wide open field which lies between creative but difficult religious books, on the one hand, and the sodden religious illiteracy of most of America on the other. It is a disturbing fact that most of the people the reader will meet during the next day or week ('religious' people not excepted!) are utterly innocent of the religious and moral ideas that are common coin to the readers of *Christianity and Society*. These writers seek to remedy this situation.

JOHN HUTCHISON

THE SEVEN STOREY MOUNTAIN. *By Thomas Merton.* New York: Harcourt Brace, 1948. \$3.00.

The Seven Storey Mountain is the autobiography of a thirty-three year old American Trappist monk. Although the author

is violently and ignorantly intolerant of Protestantism, Protestants should read the book for its brilliant account of a spiritual pilgrimage and for the accuracy of its analysis of the sick soul trying to find its way in a sick society. The author's futile attempt to escape the Hound of Heaven leads through the fascinating experience of his early secular life in Europe and America. Of special interest are his adolescent sallies into communism and the ghettos of Harlem, followed by the reaction into violent asceticism and mysticism.

One of New York's outstanding Protestant ministers has said from the pulpit that *Seven Storey Mountain* is at once the most fascinating and revolting of books. The reviewer concurs. The reader is forced once more to ask what is the relation between an insatiable self-regard and the life of contemplation. Is this young man driven by God, as he feels he is, or by a terrible need to escape into that seclusion of constant and wholly-engrossing self-analysis, chastity, obedience, and peace? His comfort is his conviction that his prayers for the troubled world he has left have more efficacy than anything else he could have done with his life. It is significant that in the twentieth century as in medievalism some temperaments can find an answer only in the hidden mystery of monasticism. Perhaps for this man and many others of our day the only alternative to monasticism is the mental sanitarium. In any case this book calls the reader to give fresh and searching account of his faith, his spiritual habits, and his answer to this brittle and naked civilization.

WINNIFRED WYGA

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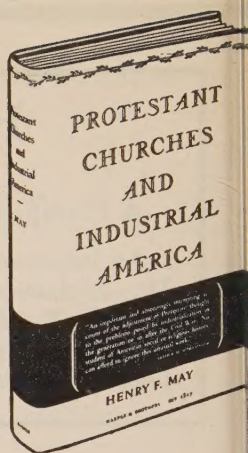
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